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THE ALIEN AS A SERVANT OF POWER: COURT JEWS AND CHRISTIAN RENEGADES

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When political rulers are greedy for power, when they wish to maximize their autonomy in the face of feudal, bureaucratic and other impediments, they tend to avail themselves of the services of alien groups of men who have no roots in the country they rule. The rootless alien is an ideal servant of power who can easily be bent to the ruler's purposes because he is totally dependent and cannot accumulate autonomous power. Which particular alien groups can be used for these purposes depends on availability and historical circumstances. This paper deals with two historical cases: The Court Jews of Baroque Germany and the Christian renegades who served the Ottoman Empire at its height.

WHEN political rulers in absolutist states or bureaucratic empires wish to shore up their autonomous powers so as not to be dependent on feudal retainers, bureaucratic officials, gentry families, estates, or guilds of commoners, they are likely to attract to their court men who have no roots in the society over which these rulers exercise dominion. Men distant from the underlying population by

virtue of their alien birth are ideal servants of power. The ruler can afford to be close to them because they are so far removed from him in the status order they can never threaten his rule.

To illustrate the notion of social distance: Robert Park once wrote "The lady of the house may be on the most intimate personal relations with her cook, but these intimate relations will be maintained only as long

as the cook retains her 'proper distance' " (1964:257, cf. also Mason, 1962: chapters 1 and 2). What is true for domestic servants is often true for servants of power. Rulers can deal with them intimately when they are socially distant, better still when they are alien to everyone else in the society.

Reliable servants of power become especially useful in periods of social transformation when rulers want to wrest economic and political resources from dispersed power centers not under their control. At such historical junctures rulers become especially greedy. As I have argued elsewhere (1967), they then attempt to recruit to their staff men who will serve them totally.

Such allegiance is hard to gain from the ordinary run of men whose roles are varied because they are embedded in the texture of social life through ties with peers and kin, or involvement in occupational or residential groups. I showed in an earlier paper (1964, cf. also Hopkins, 1963) that political eunuchs can be seen as prototypical servants of power because they lacked roots in the social structure and hence depended on the oriental monarchs who used them. Being typically recruited from young children taken in war raids on the periphery of the Empire and then castrated, they had neither effective families of orientation nor of procreation. They could establish no ties in the community, and their loyalty was available to the monarch. There are, however, many cases where uncastrated members of alien communities served absolutist power. Such aliens, although sexually potent, were as politically impotent as the eunuchs.

A full historical survey would show that rulers used a great variety of alien elements to maximize their power and free them from indigenous social forces. The Islamic rulers of Egypt relied on slave soldiers, the Mamelukes, to buttress their regime. Jews were major advisors in the Muslim courts of medieval Spain, supporting the regime against the partly Christian population. Several African rulers relied on alien slaves. French kings used Swiss mercenaries, and Roman emperors used Praetorian Guards. Only two such cases are analyzed here. This is not an idiographic description but is meant to pinpoint a soci-

ological mechanism that operates in a variety of structurally similar historical situations. This is not to say that centralizing regimes cannot operate without such mechanisms nor that such mechanisms alone assure success. Rather, the point is that where such mechanisms have been available they have substantially contributed to the viability of centralizing regimes.

Which groups of men rulers will choose for their privileged servants will depend on availability. In Eastern civilizations, where harems were major institutions of the court, eunuchs that had originally served as harem guards were readily available for political tasks when the need for dependable instrumentalities arose. German absolutist rulers of the Baroque chose Ghetto Jews having pariah status in the country at large and cosmopolitan ties. In the Ottoman Empire, renegade Christians from the conquered areas of the sultan's territory were readily available.

COURT JEWS IN SEVENTEENTH-AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY GERMANY

The German princes and Hapsburg Emperors, wishing to rebuild and modernize their states and armies after the bloodletting of the Thirty-Years War and to emulate the splendor and power of the Sun King in Versailles, searched for suitable instruments. Their sixteenth-century predecessors had used the financial power of great South-German bankers and merchants such as the Fuggers for borrowing large sums of money and streamlining their financial administration. But such patricians no longer existed. In France and England a system of taxation had already developed. A native bureaucracy worked hand in hand with native bankers and merchants to keep the government solvent and powerful. In Germany, by contrast, the once proud middle class had declined into congeries of petty and spiritless small-town bourgeois; and the apparatus of state was weak (Stern, 1950:8 ff). Moreover, the decline of urban culture had revived the feudal impediments to centralized government, whether guild or estates, to which the insecure population now clung with reinforced vigor.

Under these circumstances, the German absolutist ruler, or would-be absolutist ruler must often have been near despair as he surveyed his exhausted, dispirited, tradition-ridden population. Few sectors or strata of that population gave him a lever for lifting the country into the modern age of absolutist and centralized rule.

Under the pressure of such structural limits all German rulers, great or small, turned to the Jews.

Jewish communities had existed in Germany since the early Middle Ages. Living in ghettos, the Jews at times enjoyed the special protection of the Emperor or other potentates against payment of high taxes. Persecuted and despised by the population in general and by guilds in particular, they were often driven from certain states then readmitted. Their position was highly insecure and marginal. At the mercy of the ruler, they had no citizen rights and were wholly unprotected, lacking those feudal safeguards and privileges that guilds or estates provided to Christians to shield them from the powers to be.

The very rootlessness and powerlessness of the Jews made it possible for their seventeenth and eighteenth century rulers to make a select few among them into tools for increasing power. The Jews attracted to court lived in twice compounded conditions of alienation. Their ghetto homes were communities of pariahs living in partly enforced and partly self-imposed separation from the surrounding Christian world. Ghetto Jews were prototypical strangers (Simmel, 1950:402 ff). But the Jews who became devoted servants of the court had to leave the Ghetto and abandon the rituals, and traditions, though not the religion, of other Ghetto dwellers, thus exposing themselves to the latter's contempt and rejection.

At court Jews lived in a social no-man's land. There they became the ruler's instrument for destroying feudal forces, estates, and guilds restricting his power. They were his financiers and bankers, advisors and collaborators, in his drive to establish a modern mercantilist economy and a unified, bureaucratized government. Only men free from corporative and traditional restraints, having international ties and no connections with feudal dignitaries or the urban institu-

tions of commoners were able to play such auxiliary roles.

A variety of gifted Jews superbly enacted the script written for them by the socioeconomic conditions of Baroque Germany.

Their effectiveness rested on mutual confidence and mutual support. They and the ruler were partners who, for reasons of their own, stood opposed to the traditional powers and the adversaries of modernity. Though the Jews were by far the weakest in the triad of forces contending for power and influence, their support was nevertheless central to the victory of absolutist rulers. (Cf. Caplow, 1968.)

Jewish financiers and entrepreneurs supplied the armies of their prince, financed his wars, arranged new loans and settled old debts. They supplied the jewels for the prince's wife and his mistresses, but they also were innovators in building up trade and industry in defiance of guild restrictions. At times they monopolized the trade in silver, salt, or tobacco. They built silk, ribbon, cloth, and velvet factories in Prussia; they were chief tax collectors and diplomatic representatives, financial administrators and bankers, but above all confidants of the prince.

The closeness that often developed between the ruler and the Court Jew was based on their common distance from the population at large. As Selma Stern (1950:12) has written:

Despite the great differences in social position, culture, racial background and tradition which separated them, they both lived in the same isolation: the prince because of his omnipotence and inaccessibility, and the Court Jew because of his birth and religion, which caused him to be isolated from all classes of society and to be avoided by them all.

Simmel once remarked (1950:404) that the stranger "often receives the most surprising openness-confidences which sometime have the character of a confessional and which would be carefully withheld from more closely related persons." Since the stranger is estranged from the rest of the community, one can confide in him, knowing he will not be able to use the "guilty knowledge." (Cf. Hughes 1971:277 ff.)

While the prince's relations with his subjects were impersonal and mediated through

a variety of institutionalized arrangements, his relation to the Court Jew was direct, personal, and unmediated. The Court Jew typically enjoyed the right of immediate and direct approach and communication with the prince (Schnee, 1952-55, vol III: 203 and 210).

Prince and Court Jew were one in wishing to break down those intermediary powers of estates and guilds, which prevented the direct subordination of the prince's subjects to his personal rule. In a sense, they desired that the direct personal relations which prevailed between them should become the prototype for all subjects of the prince as yet shielded from his will.

The dues and taxes paid by the Jews went directly to the prince and were not subject to the financial controls ordinarily exercised by estates and towns (Carsten, 1958:149). It stands to reason that this was perceived by the estates as a dangerous precedent and by the prince as a harbinger of things to come.

What Selma Stern (1962:75) says about the policies of Frederick William, the Great Elector of Brandenburg (1640-1688), applies more or less to all German princes of the seventeenth and eighteenth century:

He used the Jews in his struggle against the estates, just as he used them in his struggle against the guilds; he relied on them, just as he relied on all the non-privileged classes of his country, officials and officers, pastors and industrialists. They became one of the engines of war with which he destroyed the world of the estates and they were at the same time a part of the scaffolding with the help of which he erected the modern state.

Though the Court Jew performed highly important services for the prince, and though they were often intimate, their relations remained asymmetrical. The social gulf that separated them was so vast that symmetrical reciprocity could never develop between them. The Court Jews were rewarded with titles, money, specialized immunities and privileges. Despite these exchanges of goods and services the Prince expected particular loyalty and gratitude from the Jew. In Simmel's view (1950: 395), the Jew was considered as having a "generalized obligation . . . which [could] be redeemed by no accomplishment

whatever." He was permanently in debt to the ruler who had raised him from the depths.

Though the position of Court Jew became institutionalized in time, each incumbent to that position depended exclusively on the personal support of his prince. There was no security of tenure, as in bureaucratic organizations, nor could the Court Jew transmit the position to his descendants, as in hereditary service aristocracies. Unsupported by the population, unprotected by bureaucratic safeguards, unable to transmit their privileges to their descendants, the Court Jews could accumulate no power and hence were ideal instruments for men of power.

Specific Court Jews served specific princes on a particularistic basis. Hence the death of a ruler and the accession of a successor often caused the fall of the favorite of the preceding reign. The boon of particularism then turned to disaster. Often the Jew was thrown to the wolves, hung with the misdeeds of the previous regime. Even in his fall, he served his rulers. The guilds and estates who had bitterly opposed him not only as a competitor but as representative of the hated state, were now free to vent their resentment.

Their hatred was directed not against the prince, who was surrounded by the trappings of divine right and so high that he could not be reached by their criticisms, but against his 'evil councillors' who levied taxes in his name and carried out his policies. Among these councillors the Jews were particularly vulnerable because they had no recognized status, because they were strong only if protected by the prince. (Carsten, 1958:150.)

The growth of the modern state in Germany rested to a high degree on the services Court Jews provided for their princes. Their role came to an end in the nineteenth century when the growth of modern banking and modern administration made them obsolete. As the economic historian David S. Landes (1960:205) has written, "Personal considerations retained their importance [only] so long as the credit of the state was weaker than that of the banker."

Court Jews, as has been shown, were lifted by their princes from their status as pariahs into the heady world of the court to serve their masters as totally beholden instruments of rule. They were the func-

tional equivalents of political eunuchs of the Eastern world and celibate priests of the Catholic Church. Though they had families of their own, these families were as effectively cut off from the surrounding world of the gentiles as individual eunuchs or celibate priests were from the community and kinship that grow from sexual union.

Their descendants frequently moved into upper class positions, most often after becoming Christians and in this sense were in the vanguard of Jewish upward mobility in the next period. But in so doing they became structurally unfitted for the services their ancestors had provided.

Similar dynamics were at work in the use of renegade Christians by the Ottoman Empire. Here also rulers made these men devoted servants because they were aliens in the land. Their descendants too could carve themselves a niche in the upper class; but they themselves, while often reaching heights of power and privilege depended on the ruler who had raised them.

RENEGADE CHRISTIANS AS MAINSTAYS OF OTTOMAN RULE

In its early stages, the Ottoman Empire was based on a relatively unstable balance between the Sultan's forces and his civilian and military bureaucracy, and "feudal" and aristocratic land owning strata. (Eisenstadt, 1960:288.) But the great sultans of the fourteenth and fifteenth century not only gradually extended the Turkish domain in the Balkans and eastern Mediterranean but reduced previously powerful feudal forces, establishing the sultan's administration as the undisputed power in the land. They succeeded mainly because they fashioned a most peculiar civilian and military administration consisting almost entirely of non-native recruits unattached to the native Muslim population. At the summit of its power and splendor under Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566), the Ottoman state rested largely on a military and civilian staff of renegade Christians. The standing army of foot soldiers, the Janissaries; the regular mounted regiments of the household, the Sipahis of the Porte; as well as the personnel of the sultan's court, his key advisors and administrative aides, had all the status

of *Kul*, slaves of the sultan. None were native-born Muslims.

Slaves were partly acquired in the usual way, through capture or purchase. But since the late fourteenth century the Ottoman Empire resorted to a social invention not to be found in other Bureaucratic Empires: periodical levies (*devsirme*) of young male children of the sultan's Christian subjects. These tribute boys were carefully trained, converted to the Muslim faith, and used as mainstays of the standing army and administrative system. Around three thousand tribute boys were annually recruited, and the whole number at any one time is estimated to have been around eighty thousand (Lyber, 1966:49).

The children so enrolled were completely dependent on the sultan. They were cut off from their parent and kin, and had almost no contact with the native Muslim population. However, though technically slaves, they were not socially inferior. They were aware that they constituted the main support of the sultan's regime and that they monopolized state positions from which free-born Muslims were excluded. Like European aristocrats, these "slaves" were immune from taxation and responsible only to their own courts and the sultan himself.

Upon joining the sultan's great slave household the young Christian recruits were examined and classified by highly trained officials. The great majority, about ninety percent, were sent to Asia Minor to serve with feudal landowners, to learn the language, to master the arts of war and to be converted to Islam. On their return to the capital they entered one of the great military corps. Meanwhile some ten percent of the total, selected for appearance and ability, were separated from the rest and trained as pages in the Palace Schools to become administrative leaders of the Empire and courtiers of the sultan. After graduation they first assumed minor posts in the provinces and then climbed the ladder of hierarchy. As one historian puts it (L. S. Stavrianos, 1958:85) "The net result of this remarkable system was that a great Muslim empire was based upon Christian brawn and Christian brain." Between 1453 and 1623 only five of the forty-seven grand viziers were of Turkish origin. The Ottoman

system took boys from the cattle-run and the plow and made them courtiers, administrators and army officers (Lybyer, 1966: 45 ff). For Christian renegades, though not for native Muslims, the career was open to all talent. As an overawed Hapsburg ambassador observed at the time of Suleiman (Stavrianos, 1958:85):

In Turkey every man [read every slave, L.A.C.] has it in his power to make what he will of the position into which he is born and of his fortune in life. Those who hold the highest posts under the sultan are very often the sons of shepherds and herdsmen. . . . Thus among the Turks, dignities, offices, administrative posts are the rewards of ability and merit. . . . This is why the Turks succeed in all they attempt . . . Our method is very different: there is no room for merit, but everything depends on birth. . . .

Christian renegades in every branch of service were paid directly and in cash by the sultan and were never provided with income-producing fiefs, as was the case with officers in the feudal army, the provincial Sipahis. Hence, they could not build an independent basis of support. They remained as the seventeenth-century observer Paul Ricaut remarked, "strangers and foreigners in the land they ruled" (Lybyer, 1966:119). Their tenure was like that of officials in contemporary Russia, always uncertain. Moreover, no office was hereditary. In fact, the reverse of the hereditary system prevailed; the sons of ex-Christian slaves were normally excluded from employment in the imperial system which rested almost exclusively on the first generation of renegade Christians. Every man, then, was "his own ancestry"; and honor and prestige rested exclusively on achievement (Lybyer, 1966:119).

The members of the standing army, almost all Christian renegades, were effectively insulated from the rest of the population. They were paid in cash, as has been mentioned; but in addition they were kept ignorant of money-making crafts during their training, and forbidden to engage in such crafts at later stages in their career. Hence, they could not accumulate property (Gibb and Bowen, 1950:63). The government, moreover, acquired army supplies directly from producers, without resort to civilian middlemen, further shielding the army from contamination by civilian society

(Gibb and Brown, 1950:63). The slave army was a state within the state.

Janissaries were forbidden to marry before their retirement, though this prohibition was not always enforced. Sipahis of the Porte married late, if they married at all. This of course further insulated them from the native population. A number of contemporary observers, viewing the warriors' celibacy, were moved to note the monastic aspects of the system (Lybyer, 1966:70). In any case, the standing army was exclusively based on first-generation Christian renegades; and whatever children they may have sired were absorbed by the native Muslim population.

The Ottoman system at its height combined the advantages of ascription and achievement in filling positions. The native population remained tied to the soil, domesticated by traditional Muslim religious and legal institutions, and largely ruled by a native fief-holding service nobility that kept them in submission. The mainstays of the regime, in contrast, were rootless aliens entirely dependent on the sultan. The slave administration, the slave army and the slave court guarded the sultan from overthrow by the subject population and freed him from reliance on popular support while assuring wide open careers for the talented among his servants.

The slave administration freed the sultan from the drawbacks to which ascriptive and hereditary office holders are invariably prone: there could be no deadwood among the eager and hungry young recruits who must all have felt that they carried a marshal's baton in their knapsack, though the sword was never far from their neck. As a contemporary observer put it:

Being all slaves by condition, and slaves of a single lord, from whom alone they hope for greatness, honor, and riches, and from whom, on the other hand, they fear punishment, chastisement, and death, what wonder that in his presence and in rivalry with each other they will do stupendous things. (Quoted in Lybyer, 1966:65.)

The lowest Janissary had a chance to rise either through promotion in his corps, or by being transferred into the cavalry or administrative office. Expansion of the Empire through conquest ever opened room at the

top; and the losses from continuous warfare as well as frequent dismissals from office and executions, enlarged the chances of upward mobility (Lybyer, 1966:83).

Christian renegades were loyal to the sultan since he was their only support and since they were effectively barred from contact and commerce with the native population. With the advancements offered, they could well aspire to the highest military and civilian offices. Career aspirations were hence effectively harnessed to the functional requirements of the regime.

To this may be added an aspect of the psychological make-up of the renegade to which Simmel (1950:383) draws attention.

He exhibits a characteristic loyalty to his new political, religious, or other party. The awareness and firmness of this loyalty (other things being equal) surpasses those of persons who have belonged to the party all along. . . . [Janissaries] were the most loyal and energetic subjects. The special loyalty of the renegade seems to me to rest on the fact that the circumstances under which he enters the new relationship have a longer and more enduring effect than if he had naively grown into it, so to speak, without breaking with a previous one.

The renegade is, as it were, forever on trial. He must continually prove himself worthy of his new status and standing. Just as Weber's Calvinist must forever attempt to place himself among the elect, so the renegade must justify himself in his new master's eyes by devotedly and energetically executing entrusted tasks.

Hence not only self-interest made the Christian renegade strive to advance but the awareness of his status as outsider. With one exception, administrative positions were staffed by Christian renegades. And this exception significantly strengthens the sociological rule. The inner household of the sultan as well as the harem were staffed not by ordinary slaves, but eunuchs, some African, some Christian in origin (Lybyer, 1966:56 ff and 123 ff). For the most intimate functions performed for the sultan, to be a Christian renegade was not enough. These positions were reserved for men undeflected by sexual ties from devotion to the sultan. When it came to tending the holiest of holy, his inner sanctuary, the sultan relied on men whose alienation was twice com-

pounded; they were not only strangers in the land, but powerless to bond sexually with its inhabitants (Coser, 1964).¹

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

I have attempted with two historical examples, the Court Jews of Baroque Germany and the Christian renegades of the Ottoman Empire at its height, to illustrate the sociological point that whenever rulers are greedy for power, whenever they wish to maximize their autonomy in the face of feudal, bureaucratic, or other impediments, they tend to avail themselves of the services of alien groups rootless in the country they rule. The alien, I have argued, is easily bent to the ruler's purposes and an ideal servant of power.

I leave it to the reader's sociological imagination to conjure up other cases past or present where this approach might bear sociological fruit.

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¹ The Ottoman Empire began to decline when after the reign of Suleiman feudal principles again asserted themselves, and the Janissaries and other army units began to be staffed by native Muslims rather than renegade Christians. Ascription, and corruption, replaced the system based on advancement by merit; and the Empire gradually became the "Sick Man of Europe."

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REWARD DISTRIBUTION AND WORK-ROLE ATTRACTIVENESS IN THE KIBBUTZ—REFLECTIONS ON EQUITY THEORY¹

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The problematic nature of role attractiveness among office-holders in Israeli Kibbutzim is examined by comparing a representative sample of managers and workers of a typical production unit in the Kibbutz. The results indicate that, despite enjoying greater intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, managers tend to be less attracted than the rank-and-file to their jobs. This finding is explained by equity theory, i.e., the managers do not get out of the job what they should on the basis of what they have put into it. The apparent penetration of equity to the egalitarian-oriented Kibbutz is explained in light of its continuous processes of role differentiation and professionalization. The relevance of such processes for the equity argument is further indicated by the analysis of related data. The article concludes with some suggestions concerning possible extensions of the equity principle and the social conditions of its applicability.

THE differential allocation of rewards has been a major factor accounting for variations in the attractiveness of different roles for individuals. To be sure, the social psychological processes underlying the operation of rewards are not yet fully understood, and different parameters

have been offered as mediating the effects of rewards on attitudes and behaviors. The concepts of value importance (Vroom, 1964; Evans, 1969; Mobley and Lock, 1970), status consistency (Homans, 1961; Brandon, 1965; Sampson, 1968), expectancy (Vroom, 1964; Lawler, 1971) and equity (Homans, 1961; Jacques, 1961; Blau, 1964; Adams, 1965) illustrate the importance of such variables, particularly as they apply to the work situation. Yet, the general positive influence exerted by rewards on attitudes toward roles with which they are associated is commonly accepted

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